225 In fishing for turtle, one man stands at the bow of the boat, holding the mainshaft and extension cord in one hand. When he sights a turtle, he propels the mainshaft at the animal's carapace, retaining a firm grip on the mainshaft and the extension cord. If it is struck, the turtle lurches away, loosening the foreshaft and unplugging it from the mainshaft. Tired eventually by the tension [411] applied by the fisherman on the extension cord, the turtle is finally stunned by a wooden club and lifted into the boat.

225 There is evidence that the turtle-fishing complex has consider-175 able time depth and stability. The Seri were using similar apparatus and methods at least as early as 1825 (Hardy 1829: 296-297). At [501] this time they employed balsa boats rather than wooden boats with outboard motors and torches of cactus fibers instead of kerosene lamps. The complex continued, apparently with little change, through 1896 (McGee 1898: 187-193). Wooden boats and kerosene [177] lamps began to be adopted during the 1920s, and outboard motors were introduced in the 1940s.

411 During the entire period of 135 years (1825-1960), however, the harpoon tackle underwent only one important innovation. The 225 gasket on the foreshaft was introduced by a Seri Indian about the ● 176 year 1935. The addition of the gasket was related to, and coincided [439] in time with, the first attempts of the Seri to supply turtles to the commercial market. When they caught turtles solely for their own use, they did not need to keep the animals alive for very long, but when they began to sell them it became important to preserve them alive until they reached the market. The gasket acts like the hilt on a sword, preventing the entrance of the foreshaft hafting into the turtle's body. Through its contact with the carapace, it restricts the rotation of the point within the animal's body and provides a seal which inhibits the loss of blood, and thus prevents early death. After the turtle is stunned with a club and lifted into the boat, the foreshaft is removed and the hole which it made is stuffed with a piece of cloth.

124 Seri men were shown a harpoon foreshaft from a museum archive and asked what it was for and whether they themselves made similar 411 ones. If an informant acknowledged that he made them, he was asked, at the minimum, to detail the materials he used, the procedures he followed, and the approximate amount of time it would take him to produce one. Later he was requested to show the field worker examples of the foreshafts he had made. Of the approximately 40 adult Seri males, about 25 were available for questioning. Of these, approximately ten did not make foreshafts or had made them in the past but did so no longer; they were mainly older men and those [474] engaged in the administration of the Sociedad Cooperative de Pro-[887] duccion Pesquera Seri. Five men either would not or could not volunteer information. Data were obtained from the remaining ten adult men and from one eight-year-old boy; they include 21 foreshafts made by these eleven people.

411 The materials from which a foreshaft can be shaped and as-325 sembled vary within what is available in the Seri environment. Iron

8: Ascher E-5 (1960) 1962 NU31 Seri NU31

TABLE 1
Foreshaft Specifications

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Manufacturer	Plate Reference	Approx. Age of Artifact	Length of Hafting (Centimeters)	Length of Point (Centimeters)
Ernesto Dias	Ia	2	6.5	5.3
José Estorga	Ib	6	6.5	5.6
Francisco Garcia	Ic	4	6.5	5.8
Alberto Mendes	Id	5	5.8	5.7
Ignacio Molina	Ie	3	8.7	11.5
Louis Moreno	If	3	7.8	4.8
Ramon Perrales	Ig	3	7.0	4.4
Francisco Barnett	IIa	1	6.8	5.2
	IIb	2	6.4	5.3
	IIc	2	6.8	5.9
	IId	2	7.3	6.1
	IIe	–	7.7	5.8
Miguel Barnett		3	7.8	5.0
		3	6.0	4.9
		5	6.1	4.5
Ernesto Corrales		1	3.1	2.8
(8-year old boy)		1	3.0	4.2
Juan Moreno		7	6.5	5.0
		7	6.7	4.9
		8	6.7	5.2
		7	6.1	5.1

cause he did not believe it would help retard death. This man, interestingly enough, is the nephew of Alberto Molina, whom the Seri believe responsible for having introduced the gasket. The foreshaft produced by Ignacio (Plate Ie) is the most divergent one in the entire collection. It is, for example, the only one in which the point has two barbs and, except for those made by the eight-year-old boy, the only one in which the length of the point above the hafting exceeds that of the hafting. The finished products also show some variation in the source of the rubber used for the gasket and in the kind of wood used for the hafting. Six of the eight gaskets are shaped from an automobile tire, two from scraps of rubber of which the men did not recall the source. Three haftings (Plate Ia, d, g) are made of ironwood, all the others of mesquite, which is easier to obtain than suitable ironwood or nonindigenous woods.

[196]

Discussion

The foregoing example is designed as a paradigm to illustrate how observations on ongoing cultures might be adapted to the problems of archeological reconstruction. It is, of course, imperative to focus on behavior where matter is changed in some way, because it is only in altered matter that behavior is protracted through time. The example is deliberately selected to capitalize on an important area

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